



Gerry Connolly's Chairman's Report

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Gerry Connolly, Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
12000 Government Center Parkway
Suite 530
Fairfax, VA 22035



703-324-2321 (voice)
703-324-2319 (TTY)
703-324-3955 (fax)
chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov

Welcome to my electronic newsletter! I use this format to keep you informed about issues and events which affect your quality of life in Fairfax County. I hope you find it useful and that you will pass it along to your friends, family and neighbors, so that the newsletter becomes a community conversation and an opportunity for us to share our views.

If you have received this Newsletter through forwarding and would like to receive future editions directly, please visit: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bos/chair/chairmans_report.htm to sign up.

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Eliminating the Auto Decal Tax:

In my 2006 State of the County speech, I proposed the elimination of the Automobile Decal and its associated \$25 per vehicle fee. On May 1, 2006, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the elimination.

The Auto Decal was once a tool to help localities ensure that people properly paid their personal property tax. After reviewing the County's current practices with the Department of Tax Administration, the Board was informed that current technology made the use of the decal obsolete. Coordination with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles data has enabled us to discover those vehicles registered in Fairfax County and automatically cross-check those with our tax records to ensure that each vehicle has made the proper tax payments. Localities in Virginia already have the ability to enact holds on renewing DMV vehicle registrations if there is an outstanding personal property tax, and they also have the ability to put liens on salaries, bank accounts and the vehicles, themselves, if necessary. In short, the Auto Decal truly is an obsolete tool, used solely now as an avenue to extract the Vehicle Decal fee.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors felt it important to get rid of this obsolete tool. While several other jurisdictions have previously removed the need for a decal, they have all retained the fee in some form. We believed that was not fair to the taxpayers. The fee was originally intended to cover the administration of the decal program. If the decal is no longer necessary, then it is only right that we eliminate the fee. The average home in Fairfax will save \$58 a year.

Come November 5, 2006, you can remove that green window sticker for good. You won't need to display, or pay for, another decal in Fairfax County.

Cutting the Real Estate Tax Rate:

The Board of Supervisors approved a reduction of 11 cents in the real estate tax rate, the second largest rate reduction in the County's history. The rate now stands at \$0.89 per \$100 of assessed value, the lowest in the County's history. Without that 11 cent reduction, residents would be paying \$595 more this year. Cumulative tax rate cuts of 34 cents since FY2002 have saved average taxpayer \$3,512 than if the Board had left the tax rate at the FY2001 level of \$1.23.

Board Approves Bicycling Initiatives as Part of FY07 Budget:

As part of its actions on Fairfax County's FY2007 Budget, the Board of Supervisors included funding for programs to strengthen the County's bicycle network. A Countywide Bicycle Coordinator position was created, and \$375,000 was allocated to fund an inventory of County streets and trails to determine their applicability as bicycle routes. The information obtained from the inventory will also be used to create a map of bicycle facilities in the County for public distribution.

These actions, part of a larger Comprehensive Bicycle Initiative (CBI) developed by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation at request by the Board of Supervisors, will continue the Board's policy of increasing transportation choices in Fairfax County. Following completion of the bicycle facilities inventory, recommended projects will be included in the 2007 Transportation Bond, which will come to voters in November of that year. Projects not requiring construction (such as striping bike lanes on existing, wide

streets) will be implemented as soon as possible after the facilities inventory is completed.

Chairman Connolly was proud to work with members of the Washington Area Bicyclists' Association and Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling in developing the CBI.

Pedestrian Task Force Issues Report - Board Develops County Pedestrian Initiative:

On January 23, 2006, the Board-appointed Pedestrian Task Force delivered its report on pedestrian access and safety in Fairfax County. This report was the culmination of a year of meetings and public outreach on pedestrian issues in the County, and will guide the County in better developing a safe pedestrian network and conducting pedestrian safety outreach.

A highlight of the report is the development of a 10-year, \$60 million "Pedestrian Capital Improvements Program" to guide County sidewalk and trail construction. Funds for these projects will be included in the 2007 Transportation Bond.

The Pedestrian Task Force's report, and other information about pedestrian safety and facilities in Fairfax County can be found here: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/pedestrian.htm>.

George Mason University Day:



GMU President Alan Merten, County Attorney David Bobzien, Supervisor Joan DuBois, Gerry Connolly, County Executive Tony Griffin and Supervisor Sharon Bulova announce "George Mason University Day" in Fairfax County.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed March 24, 2006 as "George Mason University Day" in Fairfax County in honor of the George Mason Patriots tremendous run through the 2006 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament. The Board also presented Coach Jim Laranaga with a plaque honoring the team's achievements on May 15, 2006. George Mason University is now an institution of academic excellence and athletic prowess. With several Nobel Prize winners teaching undergraduate courses, a top-tiered law school, and over 100,000 graduates since its inception in 1976, GMU has continued to improve its academic standing. With the Patriots' Final Four appearance in the NCAA Tournament, Mason has added athletic achievement to its list of accomplishments. They are a credit to the Fairfax County community.

ReLeaf in Fairfax - Trees 2006:

Several years ago Fairfax County embarked on a very successful Trees 2000 campaign in which 2000 trees were planted in the 2000 calendar year. Given the Board's renewed dedication to the environment with the adoption of the Environmental Agenda, it is high time we replicated that campaign. Representatives from

Fairfax ReLeaf and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District have indicated a willingness to help coordinate such an effort, and with the Tree Commission's Tree Action Plan calling attention to the issue, we are presented with a wonderful opportunity to further preserve and enhance our natural habitat. To that end, on February 27, 2006 and on my motion, the Board of Supervisors initiated a Trees 2006 campaign, based on the Trees 2000 model. Just a few months after this announcement the response has been overwhelming and we are well over halfway to our goal.

Due to this response, the County and ReLeaf are only taking planting orders for autumn. For more information, or to request a free tree to plant this fall, county residents can contact Fairfax ReLeaf at trees@fairfaxreleaf.org or 703-324-1409, TTY 711. You will need have ready your name, phone number, a detailed description of the potential project, including the common area where the trees will be planted, the supervisory district where you live, and whether you wish to volunteer to help plant trees.

Land Use Information:

Fairfax County has a long history of citizen involvement and participation in land use decisions. With this tradition in mind, from time to time it is worth reviewing how accessible the County's land use information is to our residents, and what new technologies could be employed to make our land use review and approval process as accessible as it possibly can be. Most if not all land use information is now created and/or stored electronically, and we need to ensure that the land use process takes full advantage of that in terms of making this information easily accessible to the public.

In most cases the information exists electronically in some form; it's just not easy to access. While our LDSNet system contains a wealth of good information, it is internally-focused and difficult for the average citizen to navigate. In an effort to rectify this, the Board of Supervisors at its meeting on Monday, January 23, 2006, on my motion created the Land Use Information Accessibility Advisory Group, which is currently working with the County Executive's Office and several County departments to help update our web-based land use information system, so that land use information is presented in a clear, easily understood, and easily accessed fashion via the County website.

2006 Clean Up Fairfax Campaign:

When we talk about preserving and enhancing the natural environment as part of our commitment to the Board's Twenty-Year Environmental Agenda, we have placed a particular emphasis on helping the Park Authority increase its land holdings within the County. In fact, the Board has given the Park Authority a specific goal to have of 10% of the County's land under the ownership and management of the Park Authority. This means, however, that once land comes under the Park Authority's control, we must, as a community, remain vigilant in ensuring that Park Authority lands are treated in a respectful and environmentally-conscious manner.

Litter on all public property, particularly in our parks and on and around our athletic fields, is a growing problem in Fairfax County, and if we are to continue to preserve and enhance our world-class parks and fields, we must reach out to everyone in the community with a comprehensive, multi-cultural, coordinated educational and enforceable anti-litter campaign.

To combat this growing problem, on February 27, 2006 I moved and the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the "2006 Clean Up Fairfax" campaign, directing the County Executive to convene a work group to

develop and implement an aggressive, multi-cultural, coordinated plan focusing on environmental education and anti-litter enforcement. The work group, with representatives from the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, the Fairfax County and Northern Virginia Park Authorities, the Police Department, the Office of the Sheriff, and the Clean Fairfax Council, is in the process of development the plan's particulars now, and I eagerly anticipate moving forward later on this spring.

Affordable Housing Initiative Update:



*Supervisors DuBois, Smyth, Gerry Connolly,
Supervisor Gross at Habitat for Humanity House
Building in March, 2006*

On Friday, May 4, 2006 Fairfax County the Board of Supervisors in partnership with Athena Renaissance Reston, LLC and the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority, held a news conference to announce the acquisition and preservation of ten affordable housing units at ParcReston Apartments. This brings the total units preserved to date to 876! To track our progress visit www.e-ffordable.org.

Summit to End Homelessness:

The Community Summit to End Homelessness brought together community members on April 7, 2006, including government, business and nonprofit leaders, with experts from around the nation to generate new ideas and solutions to end homelessness in Fairfax County. This community summit, requested by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and funded by Freddie Mac and the Freddie Mac Foundation, reflects the nationwide effort by communities to end, rather than manage, the problem of homelessness.

With the dedication of everyone in our community, Fairfax County can and will end homelessness in the next ten years.

To follow our plan and find out how you can help, please visit:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/summit.

Park Authority and Citizens Celebrate the Cross-County Trail May 6th:

Members of the Board of Supervisors, the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Fairfax County Park Foundation and citizens County-wide will celebrate the completion of the 38-mile Cross County Trail on Saturday, May 6th at *Trailfest*. The Cross-County Trail, a 38-mile facility running from Great Falls to Laurel Hill through stream valleys and County parkland, officially opened in December 2005. However, because the best way to really appreciate the Cross County Trail is to be *on* the Cross County Trail, it was decided to wait for warmer weather for grand opening festivities.

The Cross County Trail was first proposed by Chairman Connolly and members of Fairfax Trails and Streams

in 1999 as a way to link existing Park Authority holdings and trail segments into a unified network. The Trail's completion represents the culmination of thousands of hours of Park Authority and volunteer work and the addition of a tremendous natural amenity for County residents.

Events are scheduled all day beginning with a 7am ribbon-cutting at Difficult Run Park in Great Falls and concluding with a 7pm celebration at the Laurel Hill Golf Course clubhouse. So come out on the trail and enjoy all of the natural and cultural resources that Fairfax County has to offer! Information on Trailfest, including a detailed map and listing of activities can be found at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/trailfest/>.

Receiving Emergency Information:

One of the easiest steps to become better prepared for an emergency or severe weather event is to sign up for Fairfax County's Community Emergency Alert Network, or CEAN, a free service of the county's Office of Emergency Management. It's an easy New Year's resolution to accomplish that doesn't take much time or require any dieting! CEAN alerts may cover personal safety, weather, major accidents involving utilities or roadways, or disaster notification such as a terrorist attack. The CEAN will be used by county officials to deliver emergency alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis or emergency. Messages will be delivered to e-mail accounts; cell phones (text messaging costs may apply; check with your service provider); text pagers; satellite phones and wireless PDAs that are registered on the system. To register for the Community Emergency Alert Network, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean. For additional information on the CEAN, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 703-324-2362, TTY 711. Fairfax County Government offers the CEAN as a public service that will be used in conjunction with other public notification methods, such as the Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Line (703-817-7771, TTY 711); Fairfax County cable television Channel 16; the Fairfax County Government Web site; and area media.

Pandemic Flu Planning:

Fairfax County is taking a coordinated approach to planning for pandemic flu – a global outbreak of a novel strain of influenza with efficient human-to-human transmission. Because it is new, no one is immune. Its spread is rapid and fierce.

In 1918, 40 million lives were lost in a pandemic flu. In 1957, 2 million and in 1968 700,000. It is predicted that if such a catastrophic virus were to develop today, 35% of the population would be affected. Translated into Fairfax County this equates to 364,420 individuals.

Planning is imperative. County pandemic flu planners are working to produce a plan by the summer of 2006 that will supplement the county's emergency operations plan, and remain flexible as information is added or changed.

For complete up to date information on the County's pandemic flu planning efforts please visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/>.

Transit Center Improvements Opening in Fairfax County:

This month, the Fairfax Connector celebrates the opening of two new transit facilities designed to make commutes easier and more convenient for bus and Metro riders.

Buses began serving the *Reston Town Center Transit Center* on April 16th, moving from the temporary location on Explorer Street. The Transit Center is located on Bluemont Way at the south end of the Reston Town Center. In May, a Connector Store will open in the facility, allowing commuters to buy bus and Metro passes, redeem Metrocheks and get information about commuting options available to them. More information on the Reston Town Center Transit Center, including routes that serve the Transit Center is available at www.fairfaxconnector.com.

And, on May 13th, Chairman Connolly and Lee District Supervisor will officially open the new *Connector Store at the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station*. This new location will replace the current Connector Store at Springfield Mall, and means that commuters wishing to purchase transit fares or get information about travel options will be able to do so right in the Metro station, without having to go out of the way during their morning or evening commute. More information about Fairfax County's Connector Stores is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/contact.htm>.



Gerry Connolly on the Occoquan Reservoir

Watershed Management Plans:

A Physical Stream Assessment conducted in 2002 determined that a majority of our stream in Fairfax County (66%) are in “Fair” to “Poor” condition. This has disastrous implications for the health of the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

In light of these findings, Fairfax County’s 30 watersheds have been grouped into 15 watershed planning projects tasked with developing management plans to increase the health of the streams in our watersheds. Each of these projects is guided by an advisory committee comprised of interested residents from that watershed, and several, Little Hunting Creek and Popes Head Creek, have finished their work. Plans for Cameron Run, Cub Run/Bull Run, Difficult Run, and Pimmit/Bull Neck, Scotts/Dead/Turkey Runs are nearing completion, and the Board of Supervisors anticipates the submission of these plans by the Summer of 2006.

Committees for Little Rock Run/Johnny Moore Creek, Pohick Creek, Accotink Creek, and Four-Mile Run will be starting their work this coming spring, with the remaining watershed groups, Sugarland Run/Horsepen Creek, Pond Branch/Nichol Run, Dogue Creek, Belle Haven, and Kane/High Point/Old Mill/Wolf/Ryans/Sandy/Occoquan, to begin work in 2007 and 2008. If you wish to determine which watershed you live in, find out how to serve on up-coming committees, or obtain any further information on the watershed plan development efforts, please visit: <http://www.fairfaxcounty-watersheds.net/>.

By the Numbers – House Numbers and Emergency Responses:

Your house number can be a lifesaver. Your part of insuring rapid response from Public Safety is to make sure that your house number sign can be clearly seen from the street. Take a look. Are there shrubs that need to be cut back? Is there illumination at night?

Your house number can also be an invitation to criminals. If your house number is painted on curbing to identify your parking place then you are alerting criminals to the times when no one is at home. Communities that use a numerical system that doesn't involve house numbers are less likely to be targeted by bad guys.

SIGN UP FOR YOUR DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S NEWSLETTER:

If you live in the:

Braddock District
Dranesville District
Hunter Mill District
Lee District
Mason District
Mount Vernon District
Providence District
Springfield District
Sully District

You can find your District Newsletter:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/bd/PDF/may_2005_newsletter.pdf
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/dd/dd.htm>
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/hm/newsletter_ws2005.pdf
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/ld/newsletters.htm>
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<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/spd/NLhome.htm>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/sud/newsletter.htm>

LET'S MAKE THIS A TRUE CONVERSATION. PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH FEEDBACK OR SUGGESTIONS, FOR INFORMATION OR FEATURES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT CHAIRMAN'S REPORT. JUST EMAIL ME AT:

chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov WITH THE SUBJECT, "SUGGESTION." THANKS!!

--GERRY